

From 1900 to 1951, the U.S., through the Department of the Navy, appointed military officers to govern the affairs of the islands. According to the 1921 Codification of the Regulations and Orders of the Government of American Samoa, on May 1, 1900 Commander Benjamin Tilley, the first naval commandant of Tutuila and Manua, declared that the Governor, for the time being, of American Samoa is the head of the Government. For fifty-one years, this self-made regulation governed American Samoans course with one appointed Naval Governor after another acting as the maker of all laws and appointments with little regard for the will of the people. During this period of martial law there were no elected leaders.

With the transfer of power in 1951 to the Department of the Interior, American Samoa experienced little more than a transition from military to civilian rule. Civilian-appointed governors still had full authority over island affairs. In the 1960s a territorial constitution was drafted and there began to be some involvement from the Samoan Legislature. One unintended consequence of the law passed in 1984 requiring Congressional approval of amendments to the American Samoa constitution is that, whereas between 1960 and 1984 our local leaders had extensive practice at constitution-writing, after the law was passed this practice ceased. To date, the final steps toward some measure of self-government were taken when in 1977 the first Governor was elected by popular vote and in 1980 when American Samoa elected its first Delegate to the U.S. Congress.

Given this background and history of our political relationship with the United States, Faleomavaega offered the following recommendations. First, Tutuila and Manua must officially declare a union as one political entity or governing body, thereby sanctioning its authority to deal with the United States as we negotiate our future status. This would address one of the major shortcomings of the separately negotiated Deeds of Cession.

Second, I would recommend that a national convention be called to deliberate the specific provisions of the 1900 and 1904 Deeds of Cession. As I mentioned, these Deeds do not provide any real protection for our communal lands and culture as our forefathers intended. I believe we need to formulate a statement of principles underlining our desire to either amend certain provisions of the two deeds or establish an entirely new agreement with the United States. The provisions of any such agreement should define our political relationship with the United States, whether it is a covenant status like the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, free association status like the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands, commonwealth status like Puerto Rico, or even an Organic Act such as the one governing Guam's relationship with the United States.

Third, once we have defined what American Samoa's relationship should be with the United States under the terms of an agreement that is agreeable to both sides, the leadership of Samoa should then call a constitutional convention and organize a government based upon the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement, not the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, I believe this must be done as soon as possible the longer this uncertainty surrounding these two Deeds remains, the further we drift from our forefathers treaty intentions and risk the erosion of our culture, of becoming less Samoan and more American or, in other words, Americans of Samoan ancestry. As it stands, we cannot claim loyalty to the United States and at the same time refuse to apply federal standards that are incompatible with our local traditions and land-tenure system.

To summarize, Faleomavaega said, what I asked of the esteemed members of the Political Status Study Commission is that, before they become too deeply involved in examining all possible future options, they focus first on clarifying the original sources of authority underpinning our current political relationship with the United States, the two Deeds of Cession, as a foundation for a unified approach to determining our political future.

The full text of the Treaties/Deeds of Cession, in English and Samoan, as well as the 1929 and 1983 laws discussed in the Congressmen's statement are available on Congressman Faleomavaega's website at www.house.gov/faleomavaega/historical.shtml

[Press Release, May 24, 2007]

FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS STUDY COMMISSION REPORT NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that a copy of the Future Political Status Study Commission Report is now available online for the public and particularly members of the Samoan community all around the world to read.

"Many people in our Samoan community, especially those residing outside of American Samoa, have contacted my office to request copies of or to find out how to obtain a copy of the Future Political Status Study Commission Report," Faleomavaega said. "So, I am pleased to inform everyone that a copy of the report is now available online on my website and on the American Samoa Governor's website for anyone to read."

"I want to congratulate and thank The Honorable Tufele Li'amatua—Chairman, The Honorable Tualo Fruean—Vice Chairman, High Talking Chief Pofu Sunia—Executive Director, and all the Commissioners and staff of the Future Political Status Study Commission for the tremendous work they did in completing this report."

"Now that we have the report, everyone concerned should take time to thoroughly review the Commission's recommendations, especially our Fono and the Administration. As I have stated before, I believe the next logical step in this important process is for the Fono to conduct hearings to discuss the different recommendations made by the Commission. Only after such a careful review and discussion I feel we should proceed to the next steps or implementation," Faleomavaega concluded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on December 1, 2014, I missed two recorded votes on the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call 532 and YEA on Roll Call 533.

RECOGNIZING THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF HOPE

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Hispanas Organized for

Political Equality, or HOPE, on the celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary. On December 4, 2014, HOPE will celebrate a quarter-century of success in championing the full participation of Latinas in America's democracy and economy. HOPE's efforts have benefited not just Latinas, but men and women of all backgrounds throughout our nation.

A cross-section of Latinas from business, political, and social backgrounds came together to found HOPE in 1989, the same year the first Latina was elected to Congress. Since that time, HOPE has been a valuable partner to Latinas who have pushed political limits, broken barriers, and defined what it means to be a leader. HOPE has directly served more than 50,000 Latinas throughout the state of California, as well as millions more through advocacy efforts. HOPE's achievements include:

The HOPE Leadership Institute (HLI), California's only statewide leadership program specifically designed to train Latina leaders in vital leadership and advocacy skills. More than ninety percent of HLI alumnae have attained leadership positions in their careers or communities, and thirty percent have gone on to serve on a local or statewide commission.

The HOPE Youth Leadership Program (HYLP), which has prepared hundreds of low-income Latina high school students for college, and trained them in civic participation. Eighty-seven percent of HYLP participants have enrolled in college after graduation.

HOPE's Latina Action Day and Latina History Day, which inspire and empower over 1,300 attendees each year to succeed and take responsibility to ensure the prosperity of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I salute HOPE, its Board, and its supporters. They have played a vital role in inspiring, empowering, and supporting so many of California's leaders over the last twenty-five years. California, and the entire United States, are stronger for their leadership. I wish HOPE continued success as it continues its mission to ensure political and economic parity for Latinas.

CONGRATULATING CASSIDY
NUSSMAN FOR HONORABLE MENTION
SELECTION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cassidy Nussman for being named an honorable mention selection on the Under Armour Girls High School All-America Team by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA). Nussman is a senior at Pearland High School in Pearland, Texas. This award recognizes Nussman's outstanding athletic achievements.

She is among an elite group of high school athletes, joining a list of 150 high school All-American honorable mentions. After this season, Nussman will go on to compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics at Northwestern University.

On behalf of the residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Cassidy Nussman for